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Africans Tell of Bias In Moscow

(Special Dispatch to The Des_Moines_Tribune)

WASHINGTON, D. C. —A high U. S. intelligence official has given official voice to stories of open bias against African students in the recently opened People's University in Moscow.

These students have "run into discrimination," their approved research programs have been obstructed by Soviet security, and many have "become disillusioned and have said so in no uncertain terms," according to Gen. C. P. Cabell, deputy director of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA).

Cabell did not specifically mention Africa but spoke of students from "underdeveloped areas" who "don't find such utopian conditions" once they heed the appeal of the Russians to come to Moscow for study. He made his comments in a speech at a medical society meeting in Folt Worth. Tex.

Grim Stories

A number of African students have come out of Russia with grim stories of their treatment, according to other sources here, however.

They have told of beatings administered to African students for merely asking a Russian girl to dance, of being isolated by Soviet male students, of verbal abuse, of being spied upon and forced to carry, passes, wherever they went in Moscow.

Among some of the accounts available here is a vivid series of articles by a Nigerian student, Chukwemeka Okonkwo, who spent three years in the Soviet Union studying medicine.

He wrote of his experiences in the Lagos Sunday Times.

Irony

Okonkwo was particularly struck by the irony of the Soviet call for socialist unity and Afro-Asian unity while treating Africans and others from outside the Iron Curtain with contempt and suspicion.

He related how jazz music was considered "obnoxious" by Soviet authorities, and some African students prospered with a "black-market trade" in the records they brought to Russia with them and sold to Russian students.

"They wanted to buy our clothes from us," Okonkwo wrote.

He said that the students couldn't send a letter to a Soviet newspaper and hope to have it published.

A Change

Agency (CIA)

Cabell did not specifically ted, things were all right, but mention Africa but spoke of students from "underdeveloped areas" who "don't find such utopian conditions" but when they were alone

they were always stopped on the streets by security police

Impromptu debates in the dormitories were suddenly called off, he continued, and the Soviet citizens were warned against fraternizing with the Africans.

When the Russian boys "withdrew into a shell," he reported, efforts to learn why produced only hints that "retreat" had sounded, "the romance was over."

Okonkwo observed that girl friends are "a feature of university life all over the world." But those African students who developed an attachment to a Russian girl student had the "painful experience" of being avoided and rejected.

· Beating

Two other African students emerged from the Soviet Union to tell of a Mali student who had the temerity to ask a Russian girl to dance with him and was later beaten up so badly he had to spend two weeks in a hospital.

Still another student who studied medicine for two years told of the "greatest insult" he experienced. He was going up in an elevator with 10 Russians. When he reached his floor, they tried to prevent him from getting off.

"You are no gentleman, you are a monkey," they shouted at him.

Sources here say they have no information how many students from Africa have left Soviet universities, including the People's University, and returned home. But the impact of the stories of some who did return, they judged, has been discouraging others from going to Moscow.

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